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Prophets of God

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Prophecy Through Ages
From Adam to Jesus

An In-Depth Look by
Maulana Daud Hanif

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“There are no people (in the world) to whom We have not sent a Warner.” (35:25)

It also mentions the following twenty-eight prophets by name: Adam (peace be upon him), Noah (peace be upon him), Abraham (peace be upon him), Lot (peace be upon him), Ishmael (peace be upon him), Isaac (peace be upon him), Jacob (peace be upon him), Joseph (peace be upon him), Hud (peace be upon him), Salih (peace be upon him), Shuaib (peace be upon him), Moses (peace be upon him), Aaron (peace be upon him), David (peace be upon him), Solomon (peace be upon him), Elias (Elijah) (peace be upon him), Jonah (peace be upon him), Ezekiel (Dhul-Kifl) (peace be upon him), Elisha (Alyasa) (peace be upon him), Idris (Enoch) (peace be upon him) (19:57), Job (peace be upon him) (4:164), Zechariah (peace be upon him) (19:3), John (Yahya) (peace be upon him) (3:40), Jesus (peace be upon him) (3:46), Luqman (peace be upon him) (31:13), Ezra (peace be upon him) (9:30), Dhul-Qarnain (peace be upon him) (18:84), Mohammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) (48:30).

Belief in all the prophets and their messages is an integral part of the belief of every Muslim. The Holy Quran states,

“This messenger of Ours believes in that which has been revealed to him from his Lord, and so do the believers; all of them believe in Allah, and in His angels, and in His Books, and in His Messengers, saying, ‘We make no distinction between any of His Messengers.’ (2: 286).

In prophethood all are equal but their ranks are different as is clear from the following verse of the Holy Quran,

‘These Messengers have We exalted some of them above others; among them there are those whom Allah spoke; and some of them He exalted in degrees of rank...’ (2:254).

So Wherever and to whichever people prophets have been sent, they are our (Muslims) prophets as well, and we hold them in great reverence. In the following pages a brief history of a few of them is given for the benefit of the reader.

Hadrat Adam (peace be upon him)

Adam (peace be upon him) lived about 6,000 years ago. Most probably he was born in present day Iraq. He is popularly believed to be the first man created by God upon earth. This view is, however, wrong. The world has passed through different cycles of creation and civilization, and Adam (peace be upon him), the progenitor of the present human race, is only the first link in the present cycle, and not the very first man in God's creation. Nations have risen and fallen, civilizations have appeared and perished, and many other cycles of human civilization may have appeared and disappeared. Muhyud-Din Ibn Arabi, the great Muslim mystic says that once he saw himself in a dream performing a circuit of the Kabah. In the dream a man who claimed to be one of his ancestors appeared before him. "How long is it since you died?" asked Ibn Arabi. "More than forty thousand years," the man replied. "But this period is much more than what separates us from Adam (peace be upon him)!" said a surprised Ibn Arabi. The man replied, "Of which Adam (peace be upon him) are you speaking? About the Adam (peace be upon him) who is nearest to you or of some other?" "Then I recollect," says Ibn Arabi, "a saying of the Holy Prophet to the effect that God had brought into being no less than a hundred thousand Adams (peace be upon them), and I said to myself, 'Perhaps this man who claims to be an ancestor of mine was one of the previous Adams.' " (Futuhat ii, p. 607)

It does not, however, mean that the race, which lived before Adam (peace be upon him), was entirely swept away before he was born. Most likely, there had remained a small degenerated remnant of the old race and Adam (peace be upon him) was one of them. God then selected him to be the progenitor of a new race and the precursor of a new civilization. Created, as it were, out of the dead, he represented the dawn of a new era of life.

Allah, the knower of the unseen has said,

"And when thy Lord said to the angels, I am about to place a vicegerent in the earth, they said, 'Wilt Thou place therein such as will cause disorder in it, and shed blood? We glorify Thee with Thy praise and extol Thy holiness.' He answered, I know what you know not.' " (2:31)

In this verse God has used the word *khalifah* for Adam (peace be upon him). *Khalifah* in Arabic means a successor. It is, therefore, clear

that men had existed and lived on earth before Adam (peace be upon him) whom he succeeded. We cannot say whether original inhabitants of America, Australia, etc., are the progeny of this last Adam (peace be upon him) or of some other Adam (peace be upon him) gone before him.

In short, the Holy Quran speaks of that Adam (peace be upon him) who was appointed as Khalifah and the first Prophet of God, and who was raised for the guidance of mankind. God taught him the knowledge and made him leader of men. He was appointed a prophet in the gardens of Eden, which lay near Babylon in Iraq. It was a very fertile land abounding in its verdure and was referred to as Jannah, that is, the garden. Angels and other beings were commanded by God to obey Adam (peace be upon him). All obeyed except Iblis.

An explanation of Iblis seems inevitable as a lot of controversy prevails about this entity.

‘Iblis’ is a being which contains little good and much of evil and which, on account of its having despaired of God’s mercy owing to its disobedience, is left perplexed and confounded. Iblis is often considered the same Satan, but in some cases, also different from him. It must be understood that Iblis was not one of the angels, because, whereas he has been described in 2:35 as disobeying to God, the angels, we are told, are ever ‘submissive’ and ‘obedient’ (66:7). God was angry with Iblis because he too was commanded to serve Adam (peace be upon him) but he disobeyed (7:13). Moreover, even if there were no separate commandment for Iblis, the one for angels can be extended to all beings because angels are the custodians of different parts of the universe. The commandment given to them automatically extends to all beings. Iblis is an attributive name given to the evil spirit opposed to the angels. He has been so named because he possesses the qualities of being deprived of good, being left bewildered in the way, and of despairing of God’s mercy. That Iblis of Adam (peace be upon him) was not the Satan spoken of in verse 37 of Surah Baqarah. It is apparent from the fact that the Quran mentions the two names side by side wherever the story of Adam (peace be upon him) is given, but everywhere a careful distinction is observed between the two. Wherever it speaks of the being, who, unlike the angels, refused to serve Adam (peace be upon him), it invariably mentions the name Iblis, and wherever it speaks of the being who beguiled Adam (peace be upon him) and became the

means of his being turned out of ‘the garden,’ it mentions the name ‘Satan.’ The distinction, which is most significant and which has been maintained throughout the Quran in at least ten places (2:35, 37; 7:12, 21; 15:32; 17:62; 18:51; 20:117, 121; 38:75) clearly shows that Iblis is different from ‘Satan’ who beguiled Adam (peace be upon him) and who was one of Adam’s (peace be upon him) own people. Elsewhere, the Quran says that Iblis belonged to a secret creation of God and, unlike the angels, was capable of obeying or disobeying God (7:12, 13) (Commentary of 2:36).

The Law Introduced Through Adam (peace be upon him)

Under the guidance of God Adam (peace be upon him) built the House of God in Arabia. He and his followers turned to it in worship. This house united them and kept them focused. It is the same house, which is presently called the Kabah in Saudi Arabia.

Basic rules for living in society were taught to the people through Adam (peace be upon him). The fundamental rights given to all people through Adam (peace be upon him) are mentioned in the Holy Quran as,

“It is decreed for thee that thou shalt not hunger therein nor shalt thou be naked; And that thou shalt not thirst therein, nor shalt thou be exposed to the sun.” (20:119, 120)

In other words, provision of food, clothing, shelter and water to the people was fixed as the duty of the authorities. So through Adam (peace be upon him) a social order for the progress and prosperity of its people as well as of the future generation was established. Adam (peace be upon him), as has already been stated, was appointed as the prophet in the Garden of Eden near Babylon in Assyria or present day Iraq. He was allowed to use whatever pleased him but was forbidden to approach a tree—a particular family tree.

It appears Adam (peace be upon him), who had a great desire for the good of all people, approached the forbidden one also. They were an arrogant people who picked a quarrel with Adam (peace be upon him) and his followers. It eventually ended in a fight and the people of Adam (peace be upon him) had to migrate from Iraq to some neighboring country.

This lapse of Adam (peace be upon him) has been highly exaggerated by Christian writers and cited as an unpardonable sin. Rather, a sin, which every human being inherits. Bible being an interpolated book contains confused statements about the forbidden tree. In Genesis 2:17 we have,

“But the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”

Contrary to this we have in Genesis 3:4-5,

“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die; For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

This statement of the serpent as opposed to God's appears to be true. We have in Genesis 4: 6,

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

This statement of the Bible makes it crystal clear that Eve and not Adam (peace be upon him) committed the first sin. Therefore, if this sin is to be inherited, then all those who are born of woman including Jesus (peace be upon him) must inherit it first. But there exist many other verses in the Bible that prove that there were men like Malik Sidak Saleem who were born without sin.

In the issue of Adam's (peace be upon him) sin the Holy Quran is very clear and unambiguous. It says:

“And verily, We had made a covenant with Adam beforehand, but he forgot, and We found in him no resolve to disobey Us.” (20:116)

This verse shows that Adam's (peace be upon him) lapse was only an error of judgment. It was inadvertent and involuntary and not at all intentional or deliberate. To err is human. One becomes sinful if one

commits it willfully and knowingly. Hence the theory of original sin and its inheritance is a castle built on a precipice.

The lapse of Adam (peace be upon him) and Eve no doubt was inadvertent and accidental and hence not a sin. However they discovered that by acting on the advice of Satan or the serpent they had lodged themselves in trouble with certain evil family, and as a result had to migrate from that place. They, however, repented and turned to God Who granted Adam (peace be upon him) His grace. God also turned to him with mercy and guided him (20:13).

Adam (peace be upon him) conveyed the message of God to the people and was successful in his assignment. A progressive society governed by the divine rules was established in that land by him.

Hadrat Noah (peace be upon him)

Noah (peace be upon him) was an inhabitant of Iraq (Genesis 11:9). Very little is known of his childhood or youth. The Bible says that Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a just man and perfect in his generation and Noah walked with God (Genesis 6:9). He appeared about ten centuries after Adam (peace be upon him). The people of his time had become worldly and were involved in social and moral evils. They had forgotten the real Creator and had resorted to the worship of idols. They had many idols, the principal ones being Wadd, Suwa, Yaghuth, Yauq and Nasr.

Noah (peace be upon him) Visits the House of God

Noah (peace be upon him) visited the house of God built by Adam (peace be upon him). According to Al-Arzaki, Noah (peace be upon him) carried out major repairs to the House of God after the Deluge (*Akhbar Mecca*) and performed the Pilgrimage (*Al-badaya* 1:119). The worship of one God was revived in that area after long time, and the example of Noah (peace be upon him) did indeed infuse afresh the love of God in his people.

Noah (peace be upon him) Conveys Message of God

God appointed Noah (peace be upon him) for the guidance of mankind. The Holy Quran says:

“We sent Noah to his people and he said, ‘O my people, worship Allah, you have no other god but Him.

Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of the great day.”” (7:60)

On hearing this message the chiefs of his people replied,
“We see you to be in manifest error.”

Hadrat Noah (peace be upon him) then very politely told them,

“There is no error in me, rather I am a messenger from the Lord of the worlds. I deliver to you the message of my Lord and give you sincere advice and I know from Allah what you do not know. Do you wonder that an exhortation has come to you from your Lord through a man from among yourselves, that he may warn you and that you may become righteous and that you may be shown mercy?”

Despite the bitter opposition of the chiefs, Noah (peace be upon him) continued his preaching. Only a handful of weak ones, the poor and the youth, believed in him. He preached to his people day and night, and spoke to them in public and in private. He reminded them of the great favors and bounties that God had bestowed upon them and also warned them of the evil consequences of the rejection of the divine message. But all his preaching and warning, his sympathy and solicitude, were treated with ridicule, opposition and abuse. Instead of following him whose heart was full of love for them, they chose to follow their false leaders.

The chief of his people told him,

“We see thee nothing but a mortal like ourselves, and we see that none have followed thee but those who, to all outward appearance, are the meanest of us. And we do not see in you any superiority over us; nay, we believe you to be a liar.”

Noah (peace be upon him) tried to convince them and win them over for God. He advised them to seek forgiveness of the Lord, as He is a great Forgiver of sins. Enumerating the benefits of belief in One God he informed them, God will send down rain for them in abundance and will grant them increase in wealth and children. He will also cause gardens to grow and rivers to flow for them. He further drew their attention to the great creation of seven heavens in perfect harmony and

placing of the moon in it as a light and the sun as a lamp. Lastly he drew their attention to their own growth out of the earth and their return to it and then their resurrection. But all his advice fell on deaf ears. Their chiefs persuaded them to continue the worship of idols saying Noah (peace be upon him) was just a man like them who only sought to gain superiority over them. So when Noah's (peace be upon him) exhortation and preaching throughout his prophetic life proved a voice in the wilderness, God revealed to him,

“Noah: None of thy people will believe except those who have already believed; grieve not, therefore, at what they have been doing.”

Noah (peace be upon him) Offers Special Prayer

After the intimation from God that none of his people will believe in him any more, Noah (peace be upon him) offered the following prayer to God:

“My Lord, leave not of the disbeliever's even one dweller in the land. For, if thou dost leave them, they will only lead astray Thy servants and will beget none but sinners and disbelievers. My Lord! Forgive my parents, and me, and him who enters my house as a believer, and the believing men and the believing women; and increase Thou not the wrong doers in aught but in ruin.”

Noah (peace be upon him) Builds the Ark

God commanded Noah (peace be upon him) to build an Ark. The Holy Quran says:

“And build thou the Ark under our eyes and as commanded by our revelation. And address Me not concerning the wrongdoers. They are surely going to be drowned.” (11:38)

He immediately followed the instructions of God and prepared the Ark. The chiefs of his people ridiculed this move of his and termed it as an act of a lunatic. Noah (peace be upon him) prayed to God saying,

“I am overcome so come Thou to my help.”

The Deluge

God heard Noah's (peace be upon him) prayers and soon after, at the appointed time, God opened the gates of heaven with water, which fell in torrents. And earth burst forth with springs and both waters met according to the decree of God. God further directed Noah (peace be upon him):

“Embark therein two of every kind, male and female, and thy family except those against whom the word has already gone forth, and those who believe. And there had not believed in him except a few.”

And again,

“Embark therein. In the name of Allah be its course and its mooring. My Lord is assuredly Most Forgiving, Merciful.”

Thus there appeared a great deluge in that part of the world. The might of the chiefs and their arrogance was brought to naught by God. The deluge consumed all opponents of Noah (peace be upon him) including his disbelieving son, while Noah (peace be upon him) and his followers were saved. Their ark anchored at Mount Al-Judi. Judi (Djundi) is a lofty mountain mass in the district of Bohtan, about 25 miles north-east of Jazirah ibn Omar in 37 degrees east longitude and 30 degrees north in latitude. It owes its fame to the Mesopotamian tradition, which identifies it, and not Mount Ararat, the mountain on which Noah's (peace be upon him) Ark rested. Older exegesis identified the mountain which is now called Judi, or according to Christian authorities the mountains of Gordyene, as the apobacterion of Noah (peace be upon him) (*Enc. of Islam*, vol. I, p. 1059). Babylonian traditions also place Mount Al-Judi in Armenia (*Jew Enc.* under “Ararat”). The Bible admits that Babylon was the place where the descendants of Noah (peace be upon him) lived (Gen. 11:9).

The story of deluge with some variation is to be found in almost all countries. The reason is that when the descendants of Noah (peace be upon him) and those of his companions who were the founders of human civilization spread to other lands (as they were more powerful than the people already living there) they either exterminated the indigenous inhabitants or absorbed them. Thus they must have

introduced into all the countries they subjugated their own traditions and customs. Subsequently the tradition about the deluge must also have come to be introduced into other lands. With the lapse of time, however, the immigrants ceased to have any connection with their original home and the catastrophe consequently came to be regarded as a local occurrence, with the results that local names of persons and places came to be substituted for the original names. So the deluge was not a universal visitation, nor should the traditions of different lands be taken to point to separate floods (Short Commentary).

The Law Introduced Through Noah (peace be upon him)

The law introduced through Noah (peace be upon him) has not been preserved. However it appears that it contained basic principle of the unity of God. The law of Noah (peace be upon him) was suitable for his time. It was to be transformed and developed in due course to suit the future needs. The Holy Quran states:

“He has prescribed for you the religion which he enjoined on Noah.”

The law introduced through him remained in force about a thousand years (29:15). Many prophets followed his law until God revealed the new one. It extended to the time of Abraham (peace be upon him) who was of his party (37:84).

It seems that the first fifty years of Noah's (peace be upon him) dispensation were years of all-round spiritual progress and regeneration. After that moral decadence and degeneration set in and his people gradually became degraded morally, till their degeneration became complete in nine hundred years.

Hadrat Ibraheem (Abraham) (peace be upon him)

The followers of three principle religions of the world, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, hold Abraham (peace be upon him) in great reverence. He was a native of Ur. Ur in present day is called Al-Muqayyar (or Mughair), and is about two hundred miles south east of Baghdad in Iraq.

Abraham (peace be upon him) was brought up in the house of his uncle Azar. The Bible mentions different name of Abraham's father that is Terah (genesis 11:26) Tharah (Luke 3:34) and ecclesiastical history mentions Athar as his father. The Holy Quran mentions Azar as

his *Ab* (26:87). *Ab* in Arabic is equally applicable to father, uncle and grandfather. His paternal uncle ran a shop where idols were sold. Abraham (peace be upon him) observed the crafting of idols at his uncle's home. The idols were made by humans and sold to public as their gods. One day his uncle left Abraham (peace be upon him) at the shop to attend to customers. An old man came to the shop and said, *I want to buy an Idol.* Abraham (peace be upon him) asked him, *Which one would you like to have?* Abraham (peace be upon him) showed that idol to him. He was about to buy that idol when Abraham asked the man, *How old are you?* The man replied, *Seventy years.* Upon this Abraham (peace be upon him) told him, *This idol was made only yesterday. Won't you feel ashamed while bowing down before a day-old idol?* These words of Abram had great effect on the old man and he did not buy the idol and went home. Such was the dislike of Abraham (peace be upon him) to the idols during his youth. He would voice out his displeasure time and again. In the beginning he discussed this issue very politely but later on had bitter discussions with his uncle. His uncle mostly ignored such religious discussions but at the end warned Abraham (peace be upon him) of severe consequences. However, Abraham's uncle was very much impressed by his noble character and he offered him his daughter Sarah in marriage.

Abraham (peace be upon him) Appointed as Prophet

Abraham (peace be upon him) lived a pious life and was always engaged in doing of good. He walked on the path of righteousness but most of the people of his time were bent towards the world. The unity of God taught by Noah (peace be upon him) had vanished from the surface of the world and the people were groping in the darkness, engaging themselves in the worship of idols. God appointed Abraham (peace be upon him) a Prophet to stamp out the worship of idols from the society.

Abraham, right from childhood had abhorred idols and now he was commissioned to uproot the worship of idols from the society. He wasted no time and embarked on the task in full earnest. He went to his father-in-law and said, "Do you take idols for god? Surely I see you and your people in manifest error." (6:75)

He spoke in public and private about the futility of idol worship. His method of argumentation was mostly sarcastic.

During his evening meetings, Abraham (peace be upon him) used to invite those who worshipped the sun and the moon and other heavenly bodies as their gods to his house. During one of these discussions, one evening, on seeing a star he observed, "O this is my Lord." But when it set, he said, "I don't like those who set." Then he saw the moon rise with spreading light, he said, "Can this be my Lord?" But when it set, he said, "If my Lord guide me not, I shall surely be of the people who go astray." And when he saw the sun rise with spreading light, he said, "Can this be my Lord? This is the greatest." But when it also set, he said, 'O my people! Surely I am quit of that which you associate with God." Thus he exposed the false beliefs of his people. He spoke ironically to taunt them of their folly.

Discussion with the King

Abraham (peace be upon him) was a great iconoclast. His people worshipped the sun and the stars, their chief god being Merodach (Madruk), originally the god of the morning and the spring sun (*Enc. Bib. & Enc. Rel. Eth*, ii p. 296). They believed that all life depended on the sun. Abraham (peace be upon him) very wisely asked the infidel King that if he, as he claimed, controlled life and death, then let him reverse the course of the sun on which all life depended. The King was in a fix. He could not say that he could not accept Abraham's challenge to bring the sun from the west to the east, for that would have demolished his claim of being the controller of life and death. At the same time if he had said that he could do so, it meant that he claimed to exercise control over the sun which would have been a great blasphemy in the eyes of his people who worshipped the sun. Thus he was completely confounded and did not know what to say. He was defeated squarely.

Debate with People

Under the guidance of God, Abraham (peace be upon him) continued his mission diligently. One of his great debates is recorded in the Holy Quran as follows:

"When he said to his father and his people, 'What are these images to which you are so devoted?'

They replied, 'We found our fathers worshipping them.'

He said, ‘Then, you, as well as your fathers, have indeed been in manifest error.’

They said, ‘Is it really the truth that thou hast brought us, or art thou jesting?’

He replied, ‘Nay, your Lord is the Lord of heavens and the earth Who created them; and I am of those who bear witness to this; and, by Allah, I will certainly plan against your idols after you have gone away and turned your backs.’

So he broke them into pieces, all accept the chief of them, that they may return to it.

They said, ‘Who has done this to our gods? Surely, he is a wrongdoer.’

Some others said, ‘We heard a young man speak ill of them; he is called Abraham.’

They said, ‘Then bring him before the eyes of the people, that they may bear witness against him.’

Then they said to Abraham, ‘Is it thou who hast done this to our gods, O Abraham?’

He replied, ‘Well, someone has surely done this. Here is the chief of them. So ask them if they can speak.’

Then they turned towards one another and said, ‘You yourselves are surely in the wrong.’

And they were made to hang down their heads for shame and said to Abraham, ‘Certainly thou knowest well that these do not speak.’

He said, ‘Do you then worship, instead of Allah, that which cannot profit you at all, nor harm you? Fie on you and on that which you worship instead of Allah! Can you not understand?’ ” (21:53-68)

It should be remembered that Abraham (peace be upon him) always spoke to idol worshipper with irony and sarcasm. In this debate he “seems to have rebuked his people and to have brought home to them

the futility of their idolatrous practices, first by breaking the idols and then by challenging their votaries to ask those idols, if they could speak, to tell them who had broken them.”

Abraham (peace be upon him) Thrown in the Fire

This infuriated his opponents. The chiefs, instead of accepting the truth, were enraged and said, “Burn him and help your gods if at all you mean to do something.” But Allah commanded, “O fire, be thou a means of coolness and safety for Abraham!” The Quran says, “And they had intended an evil plan against him, but we made them the worst losers.” (21:68-71)

God frustrated their plans and saved Abraham (peace be upon him).

“How the fire became cool we are not told. Timely rain or a stormy hurricane might have extinguished it. In any event God did bring about circumstances, which led to Abraham’s deliverance. There is always an element of mystery in heavenly miracles; and the manner of Abraham (peace be upon him) being saved from the fire was indeed a great miracle. That Abraham (peace be upon him) had been cast into the fire is credited not only by the Jews, but also by the eastern Christians—25th of the second Canun, or January being set apart in the Syrian Calendar for the commemoration of the event.” (Hyde, De Rel. Vet Pers., p. 73)

Abraham (peace be upon him) was seventy-five years old when God commanded him for migration. “He journeyed from Ur (Mesopotamia) to Harran and from there to Canaan, which God decreed to give to his posterity. This journey had a precise objective. In pursuance of Divine plan and design, all the great Prophets or their followers, at one time or another, have to emigrate from their homes. In the like manner Abraham (peace be upon him) was asked to migrate.

Abraham (peace be upon him) migrated from Ur with a few selected members including his nephew Lot. They passed through Egypt. The king was impressed by Abraham and offered some presents and a royal lady by the name of Hagar to him.

Abraham (peace be upon him) and Sarah did not have any child, so when Hagar was presented to Abraham (peace be upon him) by the king of Egypt, Sarah married her to Abraham (peace be upon him) so

that they can have a child. Abraham (peace be upon him) was eighty-five when he married Hagar. All of them were earnestly supplicating God for righteous progeny. The Bible mentions the childless state of Abraham (peace be upon him) as follows:

“And Abraham said, ‘Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.’ And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, ‘This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.’ And he brought him forth abroad, and said, ‘Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them,’ and he said unto him, ‘So shall thy seed be.’ ” (Genesis 15:3-5)

God heard their prayers. The angel spoke with Hagar and said, says the Bible, “And the Angel of Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael; because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.” (Genesis 16:10,11)

The first child was born to Abraham (peace be upon him) from Hagar. The Bible says:

“Abraham was fourscore and six years old, when Hagar bare Ishmael to Abraham.” (Genesis 16:16).

Promises of God with Sarah and Hagar

After the birth of Ishmael, Sarah the elder wife of Abraham, was also promised by God of a child. In fact multiple promises were given to them for their progeny. In Genesis 17:16-20 we have:

“And I will bless her, and give thee a son also of her: yea, I will bless her, and she shall be a mother of nations; kings of people shall be of her. Then Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed, and said in his heart, shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old bear? And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant

with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.”

Abraham (peace be upon him) Settles His Only Son in Mecca

Abraham (peace be upon him) did nothing of his own accord, rather did as was commanded by God. He took Ishmael and his mother Hagar to the appointed land in the wilderness of Arabia and while settling them there offered the following prayer:

“Our Lord, I have settled some of my progeny in an uncultivable valley near thy Sacred House. Our Lord, that they may observe prayer. So make men’s heart incline towards them and provide them with fruits and that they may be thankful. Our Lord, certainly, Thou knowest what we keep secret and what we make known. And nothing whatever is hidden from Allah, whether in the earth or in the heaven.” (14:38-39)

Ishmael was yet a child when in obedience to divine command and in fulfillment of divine plan, Abraham (peace be upon him) brought him and his mother Hagar to the bleak and barren tract where Mecca now stands. At that time there was no sign of life and no means of sustenance at the place (Bukhari). But God had so designed that the place should become the scene of the activities of God’s last message for mankind. Ishmael was chosen as the vehicle for the implementation of this divine plan.

The prayer was made at a time when not a blade of grass was to be seen for many miles around Mecca. Yet the prophecy met with fulfillment in a marvelous manner, for the choicest fruits now reach Mecca in plenty, in all seasons.

It is recorded in the history that when Abraham (peace be upon him) left his child and his wife in that barren land, Hagar ran after him and asked Abraham, *Are you leaving us here?* He did not answer. Then she asked him again saying, *Are you leaving us here by the command of God?* Abraham (peace be upon him) just pointed towards the sky. She understood this and said, *Then God will not waste us*, and returned to the baby. What a faithful lady she was! She trusted in God and He

provided her with all the necessary things and protected them. The child grew in that atmosphere, under those circumstances and in due course this place became a town.

Abraham (peace be upon him) Sacrifices His Son

Abraham (peace be upon him) had seen a dream that he was slaughtering his only son. When Ishmael was twelve, Abraham (peace be upon him) came to visit them and mentioned the dream to him. The Holy Quran mentions the whole episode as follows:

“And he prayed, My Lord, grant me a righteous son. So We gave him the glad tidings of a forbearing son. And when he was old enough to work and run along with him, he said, ‘O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I am offering thee in sacrifice. So consider what thou thinkest of it!’ He replied, ‘O my father, do as thou art commanded; thou wilt find me, if Allah pleases, steadfast in my faith.’ And when they both submitted to the will of God, and Abraham had thrown him down on his forehead. We called to him, ‘O Abraham. Thou hast, indeed fulfilled the dream.’ Thus, indeed, do we reward those who do good.” (37:101-106)

On the contrary the Bible says:

“And He said, take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, who thou lovest and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee.” (Genesis 22:2)

In this self-contradicting statement Isaac has been mentioned as the only son, while the reality is that Isaac was at no time of his life Abraham’s only son. The only son was Ishmael who was thirteen years older than Isaac. It is clear from the Bible and the Holy Quran that the incident took place when the son was able to do some work along with the father. It sets the age of the child at the time of the incident at about twelve years. And it was Ishmael who was the only son of Abraham (peace be upon him) up to the age of twelve as Isaac was not yet born. However, after this incident God gave glad tidings about the birth of Isaac. The Holy Quran says:

“And we gave him the glad tidings of Isaac, a prophet, and one of the righteous.” (37:113)

A year later, when Abraham (peace be upon him) was hundred years old, Isaac was born. Genesis 22:6 tells us that the son offered as sacrifice was not a baby. He in fact carried the wood of the burnt offering on his head, and Genesis 22:12 describes that the son offered as sacrifice was the only son. Here it does not mention any name. At the time of sacrifice Abraham (peace be upon him) was ninety-nine years old and the only son he had at that time was Ishmael. It seems that the writers of the Bible, while claiming credit of sacrifice, have deliberately changed Isaac with Ishmael, and Moriah for Marwah, a hillock in the vicinity of Mecca.

Moreover, in the religious ceremonies of the Jews and the Christians, no trace of the supposed sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham is found. Muslims, who are the spiritual descendants of Ishmael, commemorate with great fervor his intended sacrifice, by slaughtering every year rams and goats all over the world on the tenth day of Dhul-Hijjah. This universal sacrifice of quadruplets by Muslims establishes beyond dispute the fact that it was Ishmael and not Isaac whom Abraham (peace be upon him) offered for sacrifice.

In reality, Abraham (peace be upon him) was not required to fulfill his vision in the literal sense. It was only a practical demonstration of his intention and preparedness to sacrifice his son which was desired of him. The vision had already symbolically been fulfilled in Hagar and Ishmael having been left by Abraham (peace be upon him) in the valley of Mecca, a land of arid and barren waste. That brave act had, in fact, symbolized the sacrifice of Ishmael. The other purpose of the divine command to Abraham (peace be upon him) first to sacrifice his son, and then to abstain from it, was to abolish human sacrifice, a most inhuman practice prevalent among most nations at the time.

Abraham (peace be upon him) as a Law Bearing Prophet

Abraham (peace be upon him) followed the law of Noah (peace be upon him) up to fifty years. Later on, when God tried him with certain commandments, which he fulfilled, God said,

“... I will make thee a leader of men. Abraham asked, And from among my offspring? God said, My covenant does not embrace the transgressors.” (2:125)

In the great trial of sacrifice of his only son, Abraham's (peace be upon him) conduct proved par excellent. The time demanded new law so God chose Abraham (peace be upon him) for it. The House of God had fallen to ruins and it required reconstruction. Under the command of God, Abraham (peace be upon him) and Ishmael rebuilt it on the old foundations (2:128). God enjoined on him saying:

“Associate not anything with Me and keep My house clean for those who perform the circuits, and those who stand up and those who bow and prostrate themselves in prayer.” (22:27)

Abraham (peace be upon him) Proclaims Pilgrimage (Hajj) for Mankind.

God instituted pilgrimage (Hajj) for mankind through Abraham. He ordered him saying,

“Proclaim unto men the pilgrimage. They will come to thee on foot, and on every lean camel, coming by every distant deep track” (22:28).

Thus the pilgrimage as an institution began with the Patriarch Abraham (peace be upon him) and has continued without a break to this day. The gathering in Mecca every year of many hundreds of thousands of Muslims from every distant land bears an irrefutable testimony to the fulfillment of this prophecy.

Shariah of Abraham

The laws introduced through Abraham (peace be upon him) were contained in the scriptures, but these have not been preserved as they were intended for a limited period only. However they are mentioned as scriptures of Abraham (peace be upon him) in the Holy Quran (87:20). The Holy Quran tells us that the scriptures contained the following:

“Verily, he, indeed, will prosper who purifies himself. And remembers the name of his Lord and offers Prayers. But you prefer the life of this world, whereas the Hereafter is better and more lasting. This, indeed, is what is taught in the former Scriptures. The Scriptures of Abraham and Moses.” (87:15-20)

Abraham (peace be upon him) taught simple form of unity of God to his people. Laws of Abraham (peace be upon him) remained in force till the time of Moses (peace be upon him) when other laws were introduced.

Rise and Fall of Abraham's Progeny

Hadrat Abraham (peace be upon him) was very much concerned about the renaissance of his people. He supplicated to God saying,

“... ‘My Lord, show me how Thou givest life to the dead.’ God said, ‘Dost thou not believe?’ Abraham said, ‘Yes, but I ask this so that my heart may be at ease.’ God Answered, ‘Take four birds and make them attached to thee. Then put each of them on a hill; then call them; they will come to thee in haste.’ ...” (2:261)

This is a vision of Abraham (peace be upon him) in which he was shown the way to train his followers and regeneration them.

The interpretation of ‘taking of four birds’ in this vision meant that his posterity would rise and fall four times, a phenomenon that was to be witnessed twice among the Israelites, and to be repeated twice later on among the followers of the Holy Prophet of Islam who was a descendent of Abraham (peace be upon him) through Ishmael. The power of the Jews, the progeny of Abraham (peace be upon him) through Isaac, was crushed twice, first by Nebuchadnezzar and then by Titus (17:5-8) (*Enc. Brit.* under ‘Jews’). Each time God raised them after their fall, the second revival having been brought about by Constantine, the Roman emperor who accepted Christianity. Similarly, the power of Islam was first rudely shaken when Baghdad fell to the Tartar hordes, but soon it recovered from the crushing blow. The victors became the vanquished and the grandson of Halaku, the despoiler of Baghdad, was converted to Islam. The second fall came later when there was a general and wholesale decline of Muslims both in the spiritual and political field (Commentary, 2:262). God has raised the Promised Messiah in the latter days for the second renaissance of Islam, which is to take place through peaceful means.

The Promised Victory

The Holy Quran states:

“And we have already written in the Book of David, after the reminder that my righteous servant shall inherit the land.” (21:106)

This is a divine decree and nobody can alter the decree of God. In our assessment the hearts of dwellers of Palestine will be won over by true Islam, that is, Ahmadiyyat and those truly righteous followers of God will inherit it. It will not happen, however, with the help of cannons or bombs.

Abraham’s Prayer for a Great Prophet Among His Progeny

The Holy Quran says,

“And, our Lord, raise up among them a messenger from among themselves, who may recite to them thy signs and teach them the book and wisdom and may purify them; surely, Thou art the Mighty, the Wise.” (2:130)

In this verse Abraham (peace be upon him) prayed for a great Prophet with specific missions. This was later fulfilled in the person of Mohammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a descendent of Ishmael, on whom the fiery law (Deuteronomy 33:2) for all mankind was revealed in the form of the Holy Quran.

Hadrat Musa (Moses) (peace be upon him)

Israelites were living in bondage in Egypt. The King had subjected them to very hard and difficult conditions. To perpetuate their control over Israelites, one of the measures taken against them was that the male children of Israelites be slain. The King had ordered the midwives to carry out this evil task quietly at the very birth of the children of Israelites (Exodus 1:16). But the will of God prevented the midwives from such an evil act. When the King came to know of this, he gave order to his people, saying,

“Every son that is born ye shall cast into river, and every daughter ye shall save alive.” (Exodus 1:22)

We have in the Holy Quran,

“... Pharaoh behaved arrogantly in the earth, and divided the people thereof into sections; he sought to weaken one section of them, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women...” (28:5)

Such was the scene of Egypt when Moses (peace be upon him) was born there in the house of Imran during the despotic reign of Ramses II. God decided to help the weak Israelites and bring about a complete change in their position. They were to be delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh and were to become leaders and inheritors of favors and bounties of God.

God’s ways are mysterious and human being cannot perceive them. The case of the freedom of Israelites is a marvelous one. It establishes beyond doubt that Allah’s decision always comes to pass and no power can be a hindrance in the way of their fulfillment.

Let us see how the events had unfolded for the liberation of the Israelites.

The Holy Quran says that at the birth of Moses (peace be upon him), God revealed to his mother saying:

“... You suckle him; and when thou fearest for him, then cast him into the river and fear not, nor grieve; for we shall restore him to thee, and shall make him one of the messengers.” (28:8)

The Old Testament, although it has undergone many changes, yet contains the following statement:

“And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes and daubed it with slime and with pitch, and put the child therein; and she laid it in the flags by the river’s brink. And his sister stood afar off, to wit what would be done to him. And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to wash herself at the river; and her maidens walked along by the river-side; and when she saw the ark among the flags, she sent her maid to fetch it. And when she had opened it, she saw the child; and behold, the babe wept. And she had compassion on him; and said, this is one of the Hebrews children. Then said his sister to Pharaoh’s daughter, shall I go and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?

And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, go. And the maid went and called the child's mother. And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the women took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and became her son. And she called his name Moses; and she said, because I drew him out of the water." (Exodus 2:3)

This statement from the Bible in essence is very close to what we have in the Holy Quran as an accurate account of Moses (peace be upon him).

The mother of Moses was a very sincere believer and had a living relationship with God. After the birth of Moses (peace be upon him) she suckled him as God had directed her and when she felt otherwise then without any hesitation she placed the infant Moses in the ark (28:8, 20:40) and floated it in the river and directed her daughter to follow it. The daughter kept the watch over the ark in such a way that no one could perceive it. The ark was picked up by a member of the family of Pharaoh who happened to be bathing in the river. The ark was brought to the palace of Pharaoh, where his wife saw the beautiful Israelite baby. She was attracted towards the infant and pleaded with the husband saying,

"... He will be a joy for my eyes and for you also, slay him not, hopefully he may prove to be useful for us or we may adopt him as a son." (28:10)

Then she sent for wet nurses for the baby. The baby did not accept any one of those who came. Meanwhile Moses (peace be upon him) sister managed to reach there and offered a solution to the problem saying,

"... Shall I direct you to a people of a household who will bring him up for you and will be his sincere well-wishers?" (28:13)

They agreed and Pharaoh approached the mother of Moses (peace be upon him) for the nursing and upbringing of the child. She readily agreed to their proposal and the baby was given to her for upbringing and training on the expense of Pharaoh. The mother of Moses (peace be

upon him) was so delighted over the return of her child according to Allah's promise that she could hardly control her emotions. Her faith in Allah became even more solid. She was fully convinced that this child would be a prophet of Allah in due course as Allah had informed her earlier. So she spared no efforts in upbringing the child in the best manner. Moses (peace be upon him) had such a holy mother for benevolent care and guidance and a mighty monarch as guardian unto his manhood. He had a healthy and wholesome affect of his mother, overriding the evil ways and manner of his guardian monarch. He developed manly qualities of might and power and valor from palace on the one hand, and learned good manners and self-control over them from the pious mother on the other.

As Moses (peace be upon him) advanced toward maturity his observation of daily life of the people of Egypt became intense. He was able to see very clearly the cruel treatment meted out to the Israelites. The whole atmosphere of Egypt had developed totally against the Israelites and even ordinary Egyptians carried out atrocities against them. Moses (peace be upon him) had great aversion against oppression and was very much helpful to the weak. An incident for illustration purpose may be of interest. The Holy Quran says:

“... One day he entered the city at a time when its inhabitants were in a state of heedlessness; and he found therein two men fighting—one of his own party and the other from enemies. And he who was of his party sought his help against him who was of his enemies. So Moses struck the latter with his fist; and thereby caused his death. Then Moses said, ‘This is of Satan’s doing, he is indeed an enemy, a manifest misleader.’ ” (28:16)

Moses (peace be upon him) had no intention of killing the Egyptian but his single punch caused the death of the Egyptian. On this Moses (peace be upon him) became very much upset and implored God for forgiveness and made a solemn promise with Him saying, “I will never be a helper of the guilty.” Next morning he got out of his home being watchful of the situation. Suddenly he heard the call of help from the same Israelite, who was again engaged in some dispute with another Egyptian. Moses (peace be upon him) said to him, “You are definitely a misguided person.” And when Moses (peace be upon him) made up his mind to lay hold of the man, who was an enemy of both, the Israelite thought that Moses (peace be upon him) was about to hold him, cried

out loudly, “O Moses (peace be upon him) do you intend to kill me as you have killed a person yesterday?” (28:20) This cry disclosed the incident, which had taken place a day earlier. The Egyptians were already in search of the killer of the Egyptian. So the condition of Moses (peace be upon him) became very vulnerable. He, therefore, confined himself to his home. A well-wisher of Moses (peace be upon him) who happened to know the evil design of authorities came to him with the news that the chiefs were counseling together to kill him and advised him to depart from the area immediately.

Moses (peace be upon him) Departs for Midian

Moses (peace be upon him) secretly departed from home to some direction praying and moving watchfully. After covering some distance he decided to go to Midian. After a few days' journey Moses (peace be upon him) arrived in the vicinity of Midian. In the outskirts of Midian he found shepherds watering their animals. Among them were two young ladies who were holding back their flocks. Moses (peace be upon him) asked them what was their problem? They replied, “We cannot water our animals until all the shepherds have departed with their flocks. And our father is an old man.” (28:24) Moses (peace be upon him) watered their flocks and returned to the shade of the tree while praying to God for help and guidance. When the two ladies came back and narrated the story to their father, he sent one of them back to Moses (peace be upon him). She came and bashfully approaching Moses (peace be upon him) said: “My father calls you home so that he may reward you for the service you rendered to our flock.” On his arrival at their home Moses (peace be upon him) narrated the incident, which had happened in Egypt. The old man replied, “Have no fear any more, you have escaped from an unjust people” (28:26).

It seems that the household was already in search of some good servant. So his daughters suggested for employing Moses (peace be upon him) as he had proved himself to be a strong and honest man. The father was fully convinced of the nobility of Moses (peace be upon him); he, therefore, offered him one of his daughters in marriage. In due course marriage contract was made. The old man Shuaib was a holy man and perhaps knew through revelation that his son-in-law would be a prophet of God. So he wanted him to remain in his company for a long time and benefit from his company. He made eight to ten years of

service an essential condition for marriage. Moses (peace be upon him) accepted the condition of service and remained with Hadrat Shuaib about eight to ten years.

Moses (peace be upon him) Commissioned to Prophethood

After completing the term of service, Moses (peace be upon him) set forth from Midian with his family. On the way he saw a manifestation of God. He told his family to wait for him while he went up the mountain, where he had seen the light and was expecting great communication of God. On arrival at the spot, he was called by a voice from the right side of the valley, in the blessed spot, out of the tree:

“... Moses, verily I am Allah, the Lord of the worlds; Cast down thy rod. And when he saw it move as though it were a serpent, he turned back retreating and did not look back. O Moses, said the voice, come forward and fear not; surely thou art of those who are safe. Insert thy hand into thy bosom; it will come forth white without evil effect, and draw back thy arm toward thyself in order to still thy fear. So these shall be two proofs from thy Lord to Pharaoh and his chiefs. Surely, they are a rebellious people.” (28:31-33)

With these words Moses (peace be upon him) was commissioned to return to Pharaoh and his people for their guidance and reformation. Moses (peace be upon him) had lived among them and was aware of their arrogance, cruelty and inhumane behavior. The responsibility of guiding them seemed to him very heavy and the task extremely difficult. No doubt the responsibilities of prophethood are indeed very heavy, and Moses (peace be upon him), it appears, felt that he was not equal to the great task with which he was being entrusted. That is why he said,

“My breast is straightened and my tongue is not fluent; so send word to Aaron (peace be upon him) also.” (26:14)

He also recalled the incident in which an Egyptian had died with his fist and the blame of killing him was placed on him. Allah, the Wise, granting the request of Moses (peace be upon him), said,

“We will strengthen thine arm with thy brother, and We will give power to you both so that they shall not reach

you. So go with our signs. You two and those who follow you will prevail (28:36).”

Allah said again,

“So go to Pharaoh and say, both of us are the messengers of the Lord of the world. To tell thee to send the children of Israel with us.” (26:17-18)

The Bible also mention about it in Exodus chapter 5 but in a different way.

The name of Pharaoh whom Moses (peace be upon him) gave the message of God has not been mentioned in the Holy Bible or the Holy Quran. Some historians say it was Ramses II while more recent ones say it was Merneptah, the son of Ramses II. However, it does not make much difference, as both were despotic and most cruel to the Israelites.

Moses (peace be upon him) in the Court of Pharaoh

Moses (peace be upon him) and Aaron (peace be upon him), with a mighty message and full assurance of victory from God, reached Cairo. On arrival first they contacted Israelites and gave them the glad tiding of achieving freedom from the bondage of Pharaoh and persuaded them to prepare for the impending departure. Then they went to Pharaoh. Moses (peace be upon him) conveyed him the message of God in a very plain and polite manner saying,

“O Pharaoh surely, I am a messenger from the Lord of worlds. It is not right that I should say anything of God except the truth. I have come to you with a clear sign from your Lord; therefore, let the children of Israel go with me.” (7:105-106)

“... And torment them not. We have, indeed, brought thee a great sign from thy Lord; and peace shall be on him who follows the guidance. It has, indeed, been revealed to us that punishment shall come upon him who rejects the message of God and turns away.” (20:48-49)

On hearing this message, the following dialogue took place between Moses (peace be upon him) and Pharaoh.

Pharaoh said, Who then is the Lord of you two, O Moses?

Moses (peace be upon him) said, Our Lord is He who gave unto everything its proper form and then guided it to its proper function.

Pharaoh said, What will be the fate of the former generations?

Moses (peace be upon him) said, The knowledge thereof is with my Lord preserved in a Book. My Lord neither errs nor forgets.

It is He Who has made the earth for you a bed and has caused pathways for you to run through it; and who sends down rain from the sky and thereby We bring forth various kinds of vegetation in pairs;

Eat ye and pasture your cattle. Verily, in this are signs for those endowed with reason.

From this earth have We created you, and into it shall We cause you to return, and from it shall we bring you forth a second time.

And we did show Pharaoh Our signs, all of them; but he rejected them and refused to believe. (20:50-57)

Miracles of Moses (peace be upon him)

Pharaoh then demanded some miracle saying, "... 'If thou hast indeed come with sign, then produce it, if thou art truthful.' So he (Moses) flung down his rod and behold! It was a serpent plainly visible. And he drew forth his hand, and lo! it appeared white to beholders." (7:107-109)

These miracles were so impressive and imposing that Pharaoh was dumb founded but his courtiers, the chiefs of his people, came to his aid saying that Moses (peace be upon him) was most surely a skilful sorcerer and desired to turn the people out of their land. The other chiefs joined in and advised Pharaoh to put off Moses (peace be upon him) and his brother for a while and call all skilful sorcerers from all over the country for combating Moses (peace be upon him). Then they asked Moses (peace be upon him) for the appointment of a date for the final contest. Moses (peace be upon him) said, "Your appointment shall be the day of the festival and let the people be assembled when the sun is risen high." (20:60) The discussion ended there and people dispersed. Moses (peace be upon him) and his brother returned to Israelites and continually conveyed the message of God to them and kept assuring them of the impending victory.

Moses (peace be upon him) returned to the appointed place on the fixed date and time. Pharaoh and the chiefs had already gathered all the people and their skilful sorcerers. The record of the contest that ensued between them according to the Holy Quran is given below:

“They said, O Moses, either do thou cast first, or we shall be the first to cast.

Moses said, Nay, cast ye, then lo! their cords and their staves appeared to him, by their magic, as though they ran about.

And Moses conceived a fear in his mind.

We said, Fear not, for thou wilt have upper hand;

And cast that which is in thy right hand; it will swallow that which they have wrought, for that which they have wrought is only a sorcerer’s trick. And a sorcerer shall not thrive, contrive what he may!” (20:66-70)

This contest did establish the truth of Moses (peace be upon him) but Pharaoh and his people did not pay heed to it, rather advancing in their transgression and said,

“Wilt thou leave Moses and his people to create disorder in the land and forsake thee and thy gods? He answered, We will ruthlessly slay their sons and let their women live. And surely we are dominant over them.” (7:128)

Thereafter pharaoh and his chiefs intensified in their brutal treatment of Israelites while Moses (peace be upon him) intensified his exhortation to the Israelites for becoming more steadfast in their faith and seeking help from God. The Israelites made complaints about the evil treatment, while Moses (peace be upon him) encouraged them to bear it with patience saying,

“Your Lord is about to destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land.”

They replied, ‘We were persecuted before thou camest to us and even after thou camest to us.’

He said,

‘Lord is about to destroy your enemy and make you rulers in the land, that He may see how you act.’ (7:130).

Other Signs Shown to Pharaoh and His People

God Almighty afflicted the people of Pharaoh with drought, scarcity of fruits and by sending upon them storms, locusts, lice, frogs and blood as clear signs. But they behaved proudly and were a sinful people. And when there fell upon them the punishment, they said,

“O Moses, pray for us to thy Lord according to that which he has promised to thee. If thou remove from us the punishment, we will surely send with thee the Children of Israel.” (7:131, 134-135)

Nine miracles were shown to Pharaoh and his people through Moses (peace be upon him) but they did not benefit from them. Due to the fear of persecution by Pharaoh and the chiefs, only a few youths from among them believed in Moses (peace be upon him) (10:84). After the defeat of sorcerers Pharaoh became more furious. At this critical hour God revealed to Moses (peace be upon him) and his brother:

“Take for your people some houses in the town and construct your houses so that they face each other and observe prayer. And give glad tidings to the believers.” (10:88)

Under this direction of God, Moses (peace be upon him) convinced the Israelites to dwell very close together so as to be able to help one another in the time of need. This is only achievable when people build their houses near or facing each other. It also indicated that they should have a common goal or ideal and remain focused on it. Thus Moses (peace be upon him) and Aaron (peace be upon him) concentrated on having the Israelites united and prepared fully for migration on the one hand and implored God against Pharaoh on the other hand in the following way:

“Our Lord, Thou hast bestowed upon Pharaoh and his chiefs splendor and riches in the present life, with the result, Our Lord, that they are leading men astray from Thy path. Our Lord! Destroy their riches and harden their

hearts so that they believe not until they see the grievous punishment.” (10:89)

God heard their prayers and gave them final orders for departure from Egypt saying:

“Take away My servants by night, and strike for them a dry path through the sea. Thou wilt not be afraid of being overtaken, nor wilt thou have any other fear.” (20:78)

In order to fully understand the nature and significance of this incident which indeed constituted a great divine sign, it is necessary to read this verse along with other relevant verses such as vv. 2:51, 26:62-64 and 44:25.

The Bible mentions the crossing of the sea in the following words:

“And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all the night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground; and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued and went in after them to the midst of the sea. And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Stretch out thine hand over the sea.’ And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea and the sea returned to its strength. And the waters returned and covered the chariots, and the horsemen, and all the host of Pharaoh that came into the sea after them; there remained not so much as one of them.” (Exodus 14:21-28)

The Holy Quran says:

“And remember the time when we divided the sea for you and saved you and drowned Pharaoh’s people while you looked on.” (2:51)

“And when the two hosts came in sight of each other the companions of Moses said, ‘We are surely overtaken’ ... Then we revealed to Moses saying, ‘Strike the sea with thy rod.’ Whereupon it parted and every part was like a huge sand-hill.” (26:62-64)

Along with it read also,

“And leave the sea at a time when it is motionless. Surely, they are a host which is doomed to be drowned.” (44:25)

When Moses and the Israelites arrived at the northern extremity of the Red Sea, the ebb of the tide had begun. As the water receded, it left behind dunes, the tops of which were gradually uncovered, leaving the intervening depressions full of water. The Israelites crossed over at that moment. On arrival at the spot the Egyptian forces saw a bare stretch of the shore and pursued the fugitives, their chariot wheels stuck fast in the wet soil and the water returned upon them when the wind shifted and they were thus destroyed by God.

Historians differ as to the exact place from where Moses (peace be upon him) crossed the Red Sea. Keeping all views in sight, “What is most probable is the fact that from Tal Abi Sulaiman which was the capital of the Pharaohs in the time of Moses (peace be upon him), the Israelites at first went to north east to the gulf of Timsah but finding that a net of gulfs barred their way, they turned south and crossed the Red Sea near the town of Suez where it is hardly more than 2/3 mile wide and started for Qadas.” (*Enc. Bible* Col 1437)

In short, Moses (peace be upon him) and Aaron (peace be upon him) “led the Israelites out of Egypt into Canaan. The Israelites left secretly by night, and when Pharaoh learnt of their flight, he pursued them with his hosts and was drowned in the Red Sea.”

When Pharaoh was drowning he proclaimed belief in the God of the children of Israelites. God acknowledging his belief said:

“What! Now! while thou wast disobedient before this and wast of the mischief-makers. So this day we will save thee in thy body alone that thou mayest be a sign to those who came after thee. And surely many of mankind are heedless of Our Signs.” (10:92-93)

“It is remarkable that the Quran alone of all religious scriptures and books of history mentions this fact. The Bible makes no mention of it, nor does any book of history. But in what wonderful manner the word of God has proved true! After the lapse of more than 3,000 years the body of Pharaoh has been discovered and it now lies in

a preserved state in the museum at Cairo. The body shows Pharaoh to have been a lean, short-bodied man, with a countenance expressive of anger and stupidity. Moses (peace be upon him) was born in the time of Rameses II and was brought up by him (Exodus 2:2-10), but it was in the reign of his son, Merneptah (Menepthah) that he was entrusted with the mission of a Prophet (*Jew Enc.*, vol 9, p. 500 & *Enc. Bib.*, under "Pharaoh" & under "Egypt")." (Large Commentary, Vol 1, Page 448).

Moses (peace be upon him) and the Israelites in Sinai

After having crossed the sea safely, Israelites saw the destruction of the powerful enemy with their own eyes and thanked God. God called Moses (peace be upon him) for thirty nights on Mt. Tur and then this period was extended for another ten nights. Before leaving for the meeting with God, Moses (peace be upon him) said to his brother Aaron (peace be upon him), "Take charge of my people in my absence and manage them well."

Moses (peace be upon him) was blessed with special communication with God. It made him bold, and he requested God to show him that perfect manifestation which He promised the prophet prophesied in Deuteronomy 18:18. Upon this God manifested himself on the mountain, and it broke into pieces and Moses (peace be upon him) fell unconscious. On recovery he thanked God and said, "Holy art thou I turn to thee and I am the first believer" (7:144). He was then given the Ten Commandments for Israelites. The words of those commandments were not preserved. However, they are found in the current Bible in the following words.

The Ten Commandments

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is

in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me. And Shewing mercy unto thousand of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbors wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbors. (Exodus 20:1-17)

Besides these commandments, law of retaliation, which was vigorously followed by the Israelites, is mentioned in the following words:

And if any mischief follow, then thou shalt give life for life.

Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

And if man smite the eye of his servant, or the eye of his maid, that it perish, he shall let him go free for his eye's sake.

And if he smite out his manservant's tooth or his maidservant's tooth, he shall let him go free for his tooth's sake. (Exodus 21:23-27)

The Holy Quran describe this law as follow:

"We prescribed for them: life for life, and eye for eye, nose for nose, ear for ear, and tooth for tooth, and for other injuries equitable retaliation. And whoso waives the right thereto, it shall be an expiation for his own sins; and whoso judges not by what Allah has sent down, these it is who are wrongdoers." (5:46)

During the absence of Moses (peace be upon him) Israelites due to their weak faith restored to the worship of calf, which Samiri prepared with their ornaments. They did not heed to the polite admonition of Aaron (peace be upon him). On return from Tur, Moses (peace be upon him) rebuked them and was hard on his brother. He excommunicated Samiri and frightened the followers a great deal, then picked up seventy leading men and went back to the mountain for repentance. An earthquake took place, which struck terror among the Israelites. They joined in repentance with Moses (peace be upon him) and were forgiven by God.

Moses (peace be upon him) introduced the divine Commandments on the tablets and advised them that their progress and prosperity lay in obedience to them. Israelites were to be trained in Sinai for the victory of Canaan.

Having lived for a long time in bondage and in a state of dependence, the Israelites had become cowardly and indolent. So God intended them to stay in the desert for some time and to live on game and wild herbs in order that they may shed their cowardice and laziness by living an independent life in desert. Thus revitalized, they were to be led to the Promised Land and made rulers of Palestine. The Israelites, however, failed to understand the real purpose of God or, having

understood it, failed to appreciate it and foolishly insisted upon living in a town. God wanted to prepare them to rule over the Promised Land but those unfortunate people hungered after husbandry. So they were told to go down to a town where they would get the desired things.

Promised Land and the Israelites

Reference to the Promised Land has been made in the Holy Quran in the following verse:

“And We have already written in the book of David, after the reminder, that My righteous servants shall inherit the land.” (21:106)

Moses (peace be upon him) and Aaron (peace be upon him) encouraged Israelites to march forward from Sinai to conquer Canaan, the Promised Land, and assured them of victory, provided that they strive to enter the gates thereof. But they replied saying,

“O Moses (peace be upon him), there is in that land an unruly and powerful people, and we shall not enter it until they go forth from it. But if they go forth from it, then we will enter it. ... Go thou and thy Lord and fight the enemy, we sit here *and wait for the victory.*” (5:23, 25)

When the Israelites behaved in a cowardly manner, God decreed that they should continue to wander in the wilderness for forty years in order that the life of the desert should invigorate them and infuse in them new life and should strengthen their morals.

Moses (peace be upon him) had succeeded in bringing the Israelites out of Pharaoh’s bondage and brought them freedom, but could not convince them to conquer Canaan and died in Sinai.

Future Disclosed to Moses (peace be upon him)

Allah alone possesses the knowledge of the future. He imparts it through his chosen ones. Here under we mention a few prophecies of Moses (peace be upon him).

“And this is the blessing, wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.

And he said, The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them; he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right

hand went a fiery law for them." (Deuteronomy 33:2)

In this passage three prophecies have been mentioned:

Manifestation of God on Moses (peace be upon him) in Sinai.

God's manifestation on Jesus (peace be upon him) in Seir, the area in which many miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him) took place.

God's manifestation on Mohammed which was to take place at mount Paran. The Holy Prophet Mohammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) conquered Mecca at the head of ten thousands companions. Paran in Arabic is called Faran, the name of the hill that lays between Mecca and Medina. The fiery law mentioned is the Holy Quran—a permanent law for mankind.

God spoke to Moses (peace be upon him) and said:

"I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him." (Deuteronomy 20:18-19)

In this prophecy Moses (peace be upon him) was told that God would raise a Prophet from among their brethren, that is, the Ishmaelites who will be a law bearing Prophet like unto Moses (peace be upon him). This was fulfilled in the person of Mohammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). The word of the prophecy "and will put my words in his mouth" are very significant as the Holy Quran introduced by Mohammed (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) claims to be the very words of God. There is no other religious book, which claims to be the exact words of God.

Moses (peace be upon him) was a law bearing Prophet and all those appeared after him including David, Solomon and Jesus (peace be upon him) followed his law. His dispensation came to an end with the death of Jesus (peace be upon him) in Kashmir, India.

Hadrat Isa Bin Maryam (Jesus) (peace be upon him), Son of Mary

Mother of Jesus (peace be upon him) forms an integral part of his name so we commence his life by a brief mention of his mother. Grandmother of Jesus (peace be upon him), Hanna, loved pious life and had a keen desire to have a pious child. She vowed that her child would be dedicated to the service of the church (synagogue). In due course she gave birth to a girl who was named Mary.

During those days only males were dedicated to the service of the church. Nevertheless, due to her vows that she had made earlier, she dedicated Mary, her only child, to the service of the church. Zakaria became Mary's guardian. Mary grew from childhood to womanhood in the church and lived a pious and chaste life. So pious was young Mary that her guardian, Zakaria, begged God to grant him a pious son like Mary. He was granted Yahya (John) who became a prophet in due course.

During her devotion she saw visions and was strengthened in her faith by the words of God. Angel told her that God had chosen her over all the ladies of her time. She should therefore remain devotedly engaged in His worship alone. She was in this state of devotion when one day she saw an angel in the form of a man, who conveyed her glad news from God that she would have a son. This news disturbed her very much. She argued with the angel saying that she was a virgin and under the vow he had chosen the life of celibacy and she had not been unchaste. Under these circumstances how can she bear a child? she asked. The angel replied that her statement was correct but the child would be born because it was the command of God. He creates things without even any material. He had decided that the miraculous birth of the child should take place and serve as a sign for the Israelites. They had become unworthy of prophethood due to their persistent rejection of prophets sent to them. God, therefore, had decided to shift prophethood from Israelites to the children of Ishmael. The fatherless birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) thus was to serve as a sign for Israelites.

Birth of Jesus (peace be upon him)

After receiving news from the angel, Mary felt conceived with the command of God in November or December of that year. On realizing

this, she understood that God had changed her lifestyle and she could no longer continue her devotion in the church. With the pregnancy becoming more visible, in March or April of next year, the Essential brotherhood, to which Mary belonged, in their perplexity and fearing scandal, secretly prevailed upon one Joseph to marry her. Later on, on realizing that she was already with pregnancy, Joseph wanted to do away with her but was prevented by an angel. From the Chamber of dedication, Mary went to the east in Bethlehem, about seventy miles south of Nazareth to avoid the public eye. She had no one to help her in her difficulties except God. Having full trust in God and through the guidance from Him alone, she completed her time of pregnancy. The pains of childbirth drove her close to the trunk of a palm tree in the fountain land of Judea (19:24). It appears that she gave birth to Jesus (peace be upon him) in Jewish month of Elul as dates ripe in this month (*Dictionary of the Bible* by John D. Davis under the word "Year"). The month of Elul corresponds to the months of August-September (*Peak's commentary of Bible*, p. 117)

St. Luke, writing about the time of the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him), says,

"There were the shepherds in the same country (Judea), abiding in the fields and keeping watch by night over their flocks." (Luke 2:7-8)

A careful study of both Muslim and Christian scriptures establishes that the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) took place in the summer, that is, in September and not in December. Luke's statement categorically rejects the popular belief, as shepherds cannot abide in the open fields in Palestine in the month of December. One may ask, why then the Christian world celebrates the birth of Christ on December 25th. For a clearer understanding of this issue, the following passages from the *Encyclopedia Britannia* and *Chambers Encyclopedia* under the word "Christmas" should be consulted:

"The exact day and year of Christ's birth have never been satisfactorily settled; but when the fathers of the Church in AD 340 decided upon a date to celebrate the event, they wisely chose the day of winter solstice which was firmly fixed in the minds of people and which was their most important festival. Owing to changes in man-

made calendars, the time of the solstice and the date of Christmas day vary by a few days." (*Enc. Brit.* 15th Edition, Vol. 5, pp. 642 and 642A)

And again:

"The winter solstice was regarded as the birthday of the sun, and at Rome 25th December was observed as a pagan festival of the nativity of *Sol-Invictus*. The church, unable to stamp out this popular festival, spiritualized it as the feast of the Nativity of the sun of Righteousness." (*Ch. Enc.*)

This establishes beyond doubt that Jesus (peace be upon him) was not born in December. According to J. Stewart, Jesus (peace be upon him) was born in 8 BC in September or October. For a full discussion, see his book, *When Did Our Lord Actually Live*.

The birth story mentioned in the Holy Quran is the most accurate one.

At the time of delivery, Mary was strengthened by revelation and directed to the nearby rivulet and the ripe dates on the date palms standing at the slope close by her. She delivered Jesus (peace be upon him) in pain and was exhausted but soon regained strength by the dates and water. She followed the instructions of God and avoided communication with people and remained devoted to Him.

Sometime after the birth of the child, Joseph came and took them to Egypt, where they lived till the death of Herod, a notorious king (Matthew 2:13-23).

No records are available about the childhood or youth of Jesus (peace be upon him) or the life of his mother. They came back to Judea only after the appointment of Jesus (peace be upon him) to prophethood.

Prophethood of Jesus (peace be upon him)

God taught Jesus knowledge of the Torah, granted him wisdom and appointed him prophet for the Israelites (3:50). He appeared fourteen centuries after Moses (peace be upon him). During this long period the Old Testament had undergone many changes. Jewish scholars, scribes and Pharisees at the time had tampered with the Torah and had disfigured it. The followers of Moses (peace be upon him) were divided

into seventy-one sects at that time. God sent Jesus (peace be upon him) as the terminal prophet for the house of Israel. God granted him revelation so that the wrong teachings that had crept into the Torah could be sifted and Jewish beliefs and practices could be rectified. He preached the message of God to them but they would not pay heed to him; they rather turned against him. He spoke in parables, conveying the message to the poor and the rich Israclites alike. Very few of them believed in him. Jews accused him of claiming to be the king of Jews. Little did they understand from the prophecy that he was to be a spiritual king. When he spoke against the erroneous beliefs, they turned into his bitter enemies. They even reported him to the Roman rulers of the land and demanded his execution. He was accused of blasphemy and sought for trial.

Trial of Jesus (peace be upon him)

He was tried in the court of Pontius Pilate, the local Governor. The wife of Pilate had seen in a dream that Jesus (peace be upon him) was a righteous person and that he should not be harmed. Therefore when Pilate sat on the judgment seat he called for water and washed his hands saying, 'I am free from the sin against this righteous man.' He had delayed the proceedings till third hour on the Friday. During trial too he used all means to save him. At one point he even gave the Jews an option, saying he used to give amnesty to someone every year, and if they wanted he could release Jesus (peace be upon him) for them. But they refused the offer. He asked them what he should do with Jesus (peace be upon him). They spoke with one voice: "Kill him for blasphemy and if you don't do it we will report you to the King." When Pilate could not prevail upon them, he handed over Jesus (peace be upon him) to the Jews for crucifixion.

They carried him to Golgotha and put him on the cross. He prayed to God saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani," that is, "O my God, O my God, why have Thou forsaken me?"

Hebrew 5:7 states, "When he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." A heavy swoon fell on him and in this state he was taken down from cross at ninth hour before the Sabbath day. When he was taken down from the cross he

was unconscious, extremely feeble and resembled a “dead person.” His legs were not broken to bring sure death on him. However, a soldier pierced his side with a spear, and water and blood gushed out of his body. It was a clear sign that he was alive but to ward off his enemies he was declared dead. Shortly after the incident a follower of Jesus (peace be upon him) by the name of Joseph of Armathia, an influential fellow with authorities, came to Pilate and requested that the body of Jesus (peace be upon him) should be handed over to him. His request was granted readily. He took the feeble, unconscious body of Jesus (peace be upon him), placed him in a pre-arranged spacious sepulture in a private garden. Another follower, Nicodimus, the physician, brought pre-prepared ointments and applied it on the wounds of nails and wrapped him in a linen cloth. They tended their master in the sepulture dearly. Their efforts were successful and Jesus (peace be upon him) came to consciousness during the night.

Next morning they disguised him into the clothes of a gardener to avoid recapture. Later on he met disciples in their private places, shared fish and other food with them. Tarried with them for few weeks, carefully avoiding public appearance, and not letting anyone know about his movement. Jesus (peace be upon him) secretly planned and prepared for migration from Galilee. Before disappearing from the scene he directed some of his disciples to go to Galilee. They traveled to east and met him in Galilee Mountains. He entrusted them with the task of preaching to Israelites. Bidding them farewell, he departed secretly in search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel elsewhere. His followers returned to Jerusalem. (Luke 24:46-52) He had told them that he had other sheep that are not of this fold. He set forth along with his mother and very few disciples on the long journey in search of the lost ten tribes of Israel. This ends the first phase of his ministry according to the Gospels.

The death of Jesus (peace be upon him) on the cross is a cardinal issue for the Jews, Christians and the Muslims. Jews believe that the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him) was not miraculous, rather (God forbid) illicit, and that was false in his claim of prophethood and he had no connection with God. To prove their claim they tried to kill him on the cross. Because it was written in their book, “He who is hanged on a tree is accursed of God.” They failed in their attempt as has been stated above. The Jews, however, still maintain that they killed Jesus on the cross.

Christians believe that although Jesus (peace be upon him) died on the cross, he died to atone their sins, and then rose from the dead on the third day. If one can prove that he did not die on the cross then the basic Christian belief is shattered. Hence they adamantly retain the belief of his death on the cross although facts tell us otherwise.

Muslim in general, are of the view that Jesus (peace be upon him) did not die on the cross, rather God casted the figure of Jesus (peace be upon him) on some other person. The Jews, they say, killed that disfigured person on the cross instead of Jesus (peace be upon him). This belief, too, goes against the facts. God the Wise was able to save him from all such ignominious situations. These three types of beliefs have created a great dilemma for the followers of the three principal faiths in the world.

The most authentic source of information in this regard is the word of God, the Holy Quran, which says:

“... They slew him not nor did they bring about his death on the cross. But he was made to resemble like a crucified person and those who differ in are certainly in a state of doubt about it, they do not have certain knowledge about it. They follow their conjectures only. The reality is that they have not brought death on him. On the contrary Allah has exalted him to Himself...” (4:158-159)

In very clear words Allah has rejected the claim of the Jews and has stated that they failed in their attempt to bring about the death of Jesus (peace be upon him) on the cross. Rather he was exhausted when taken down from the cross and was in a swoon and resembled a dead one. Allah the Wise has thus saved him from ignominious death and exalted him to Himself. The words of the Holy Quran, “Allah has exalted him to Himself,” are the key words to solve the issue. Because no single place can be fixed as an abode of God. He is everywhere in the whole universe. By saving Jesus (peace be upon him) from an accursed death on the cross, God exalted him and proved to his enemies that he was beloved of God and that all the accusations leveled against him were baseless.

In short the three above-mentioned beliefs are falsified by the words of the Holy Quran. It has been already stated above that according to the Gospels as well, Jesus (peace be upon him) did not die

on the cross. He did survive the crucifixion. Let us examine what happened next.

Palestine after the Disappearance of Jesus (peace be upon him) from the Scene

Jesus (peace be upon him) left Palestine apparently in search of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. It served a dual purpose: Firstly, the attention of the Jews was diverted away from the followers of Jesus (peace be upon him) and they no longer pursued them actively. And secondly, true followers of Jesus (peace be upon him) were able to carry out their message, secretly, to Israelites in Palestine in the absence of Jesus (peace be upon him) himself. Their leader James the righteous held the reign of Jerusalem church from approximately 40-60 CE. After him the Ebionites, one of the offshoot of James's ministry, continued the mission. They strictly followed the Mosaic Law, believed Jesus (peace be upon him) to be the Messiah who was born a human being. They held James in great esteem and opposed all changes introduced by Paul.

Emergence of Paul

Paul was a Pharisee, a member of the Jewish sect. He was an active persecutor of the followers of Jesus (peace be upon him).

He changed his stance while he journeyed to Damascus on a mission against the disciples of Jesus (peace be upon him) when “suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will thou have me to do?” (Acts 9:5-6)

Thereafter he was directed to go to the city where he would be given directions for his mission. When he got up he could not see anything. He remained blind for the next three days, and then Ananias, a disciple, was directed to cure Saul. The Lord said to Ananias,

“Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.” (Acts 9:15-16)

After receiving this authority Ananias went to the palace of Soul and said,

“Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus (peace be upon him), that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightiest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.” (Act 9:17-18)

Paul’s whole claim to apostleship of Jesus (peace be upon him) is based on the above-mentioned vague and unauthentic episode.

On the eve of the departure of Jesus (peace be upon him) from the scene of Palestine, deterioration of his followers had commenced. At that critical hour a division among the followers took place. One section strictly adhered to his teaching under the leadership of James the righteous, while the other section, which was initiated by Paul, emerged with a completely new type of faith, which was later called Christianity. The latter group was afraid of persecution and was not ready to bear hardships. Instead they wanted life of ease and comfort. It is necessary to mention a few things about Paul for a better understanding of his philosophies.

Paul received no direct education and training from Jesus (peace be upon him) himself nor from his disciples, rather was a bitter enemy of Christ during his sojourn in Palestine. But after the departure of Jesus, Paul, seeing a leadership opportunity in the horizon, grasped it with deception.

Paul commenced his work saying,

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us: for it is written. Cursed is every one that hanged on a tree.” (Galatians 3:13)

In the very first stride he throws away the “yoke” of the Mosaic law from his shoulder. Next he declares:

“For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, (as we be slanderously reported,

and as some affirm that we say,) Let us do evil, that good may come? Whose damnation is just?" (Romans 3:7-8)

In the third stride he says:

"That which I speak, I speak it not after the Lord, but as it were foolishly, in this confidence of boasting." (II Corinthians 11:17)

These three quotes from Paul vividly explain that he was divorced from the beliefs and practices of Jesus (peace be upon him) and his true followers, and initiated the beliefs of original sin and its atonement, trinity and the like. Instead of transforming people according to the religion, he boldly changed and disfigured the religion to suite the beliefs and practices of the people. Christ was manipulated and changed into fiction by Paul. Christianity today presents dogmas, which are alien to the teachings of Christ. If these beliefs were presented to Jesus (peace be upon him) today, he would surely denounce them. The Holy Quran has explained the issue very clearly in Surah Al-Maida, verse 117. We, therefore, do not need to go into the details.

Second Phase of the Life of Jesus (peace be upon him)

We have mainly two sources of knowledge about the life of Jesus Christ (peace be on him): the Holy Bible and the Holy Quran. In the Bible, we read (Matthew 15:24): in reply to a Canaanite woman Jesus (peace be upon him) said,

"I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

The Holy Quran confirms that he was a prophet to the children of Israel (3:50). He conveyed his message only to the Israelites. At that time only one tribe was living in Israel, the rest of them had fled Israel during the rule of Nebuchadnezzar. In II Kings 17:18 we have,

"So the lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight, none was left except the tribe of Judah."

So Jesus (peace be upon him) spent three years of his ministry preaching to the tribe of Judah, who did not heed to the message, rather tried to murder him. After escaping the death on the cross he set forth to the mountainous region to the east in search of the other tribes. We have in John 10:16,

“And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one Shepherd.”

The other tribes of Israel had moved to the east and had settled in Iraq and Iran in small segments and in large numbers in Afghanistan, Laddakh and Kashmir. The route taken by Jesus (peace be upon him) and his mother to these areas has been mentioned in Rawzat-us-Sufa, a well-known history book, in pages 130-135. According to this book Jesus (peace be upon him) traveled from his home country of Nasibian. It means that Jesus (peace be upon him) after bidding farewell to disciples at Galilee, traveled to northeast 450 miles and reached Nasibian. Next he went to Mosul, Tehran, Herat, and Peshawar en route to Kashmir. Everywhere he went, he preached his message to the Israelites only. It seems these tribes were receptive to the glad tidings given by Jesus (peace be upon him) and they accepted him readily. Jesus (peace be upon him) reached the last 10 tribes of Israelites whom King Shalmaneser had taken captive to Media, that is, the present day Iran. The Israelite over a period had settled in Afghanistan and Kashmir and on arrival of Jesus (peace be upon him) there, they accepted him.

The Holy Quran has mentioned about the shelter provided to Jesus (peace be upon him) during his difficult time, saying,

“And we made son of Mary and his mother a sign; and gave them shelter on an elevated land of green valley and springs of running waters.” (23:51)

This is an apt description of the valley of Kashmir. Jesus (peace be upon him), after surviving death on the cross, very much needed such a shelter. After the long journey from Galilee to Kashmir Jesus (peace be upon him) finally had comfort and peace. His message was easily understood and accepted by the Afghans and the Kashmiris, who were the descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. Jesus (peace be upon him) preached the unity of God and was able to unite the Israelites before expiring at the age of 120 years. He is buried in Khanyar, Sirinagar, Kashmir, India. His grave is known as grave of Yus Asif or Nabi Sahib. For additional details, please see *Jesus in India* by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (peace be on him).

Miracles of Jesus (peace be upon him)

Prophets are raised by God to bring about a renaissance in the society of their time. They infuse new life in their followers and quicken the dead humanity. The relationship between man and God is revived through them. Jesus (peace be upon him) appeared among the Israelites at a very crucial time of their history. God had been very kind to them for a very long time by raising prophet after prophet among them, but they had failed to appreciate the favors of God and were ungrateful. Therefore, God created Jesus (peace be upon him) merely with his own command from Virgin Mary without the agency of a male, in the same manner as He had created Adam (peace be upon him), without a mother or father. It was perhaps to point out to the Israelites that they had become so corrupt that none of them deserved to be called father of a prophet. They did not heed to this, rather became more arrogant and accused both him and his mother vehemently. God showed many miracles through Jesus. He raised spiritually dead Israelites to life. The humble and despised fisherman of Galilee under the impact of ennobling precept and example of the master began soaring high in the spiritual realm, preaching to the Israelites the word of God. Spiritually blind were granted spiritual sight, hearing to spiritually deaf, and spiritually dead were restored to a new life. (Matt 13:15)

The Holy Quran also mentions quickening of spiritually dead people.

“O ye who believe; respond to Allah and the messenger when he calls you that he may give you life.” (8:25)

It should be remembered that actually dead never come to life again. It is an established fact and whole history of mankind and Prophet's bear witness to it. Among the great miracles of raising the dead to life, Lazarus is the only dead mentioned by name in the Gospels who was restored to life by Jesus (peace be upon him). But in the same Gospel it is stated that Jesus (peace be upon him) said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I go that I may awaken him out of sleep” (John 11:11). It is obvious that this man was not dead actually, rather he was unconscious and with the prayers of Jesus (peace be upon him) he was cured and became conscious. It should be remembered that people are always healed through the prayers of their prophets. Moreover Jesus (peace be upon him) spoke in parables and his words should not be taken literally. Besides, it is mentioned in John 5:4 that

there was a healing pond in Jerusalem that could cure every type of sick.

Earlier prophets also performed such miracles. For example a dead man was cast into the grave of Elisha, and when the man touched the bones of Elisha he revived and stood up on his feet (II Kings 13:21). In another place it is written that Elisha crossed over water (II King 2:14). Miracles of Moses (peace be upon him) are mentioned in Exodus chapters 8 and 9. In the terminology of the Gospels, the giving of life to the dead signifies spiritual life. See John 17:3, John 20:31 and I Corinthian 15:31-51.

The following statement of Jesus (peace be upon him) makes the issue crystal clear:

“And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.” (Matthew 17:20)

“And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues. They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.” (Mark 16:17-18)

These verses show that all his miracles were spiritual. Statements in the Gospels are parables and figurative speech. Those who take them literally make grave mistake.

Status of Jesus (peace be upon him)

There is a lot of controversy prevalent about his status. The narration of the Gospels has contradictory statements. At many places it mentions him as son of man, but at other places calls him Son of God. Yet at other places holy people and even wicked ones are also mentioned as Sons of God. In short, this is a term of the Gospel applied to all humans and is not a peculiarity of Jesus (peace be upon him).

The Holy Quran states that Jesus (peace be upon him) was born miraculously to pious and virgin Mary. He was a human being and his

virtuous mother trained him in the ways of God. He was endowed with wisdom and spoke words of wisdom in his youth as well as in old age. God appointed him as prophet for the Israelites alone. He followed laws of Moses (peace be upon him) and was blessed with revelations from God. His revelations corrected those portions of the Old Testament that were tempered with by human hands during long passage of time. His revelations are mentioned as Injeel, that is, glad tidings. They do not comprise new laws, they are rather reformatory and as commentary to the laws of the Old Testament. The following statement makes it explicitly clear. Jesus (peace be upon him) says in Matthew 5:17-20:

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one title shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

His message from the mountain is given below:

And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:

And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are they, which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

Blessed are they, which are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Mathew 5:1-16)

These teachings in essence are taken from different parts of Torah that is the Old Testament (commandments given to Moses). The emphasis of Jesus (peace be upon him) on politeness was not a new commandment. Israelites during years of captivity in Egypt had become extremely cowardly, so Moses (peace be upon him) emphasized on the law of retaliation. Acting on these teachings for centuries, the Israelites had become hard hearted by the time of Jesus (peace be upon him) and there was an urgent need to soften their hearts toward other people. Therefore, under the guidance of God, Jesus (peace be upon him) taught the Israelites afresh aspects of politeness from the teachings of Moses (peace be upon him).

No change was introduced in the ordinances of lawful and unlawful things. However those things which Israelites themselves have made

unlawful (Quran 4:16, 43:64) without divine authority were declared afresh lawful (Holy Quran 3:50-51). Their neglect for financial sacrifices was renewed by Jesus (peace be upon him), and a new life was infused in them (Matthew 13:15). They became soaring beings in the spiritual realm. A mighty transformation was brought about in the lost ten tribes of Israelites in Kashmir, etc., by Jesus Christ.

Prophecies About the Future

Toward the close of his mission, Jesus (peace be upon him) made some prophecies about future. Speaking in parable he said:

There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, they will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, this is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him and cast him out of vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

Jesus (peace be upon him) said unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner; this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you. The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spoke of

them. But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for prophet." (Matt 21:33-46)

In John (14:26) we have:

"But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."

In Mathew (23:38-39) we have:

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

In John 16:13:

"Howbeit when he, the spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself: but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."

The Holy Quran states that Jesus (peace be upon him) affirmed the prophecies of Moses (peace be upon him) about the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as well as gave good news about the coming of a prophet like himself. (The Holy Quran 61:7)

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was raised from the progeny of Hadrat Ishmael (peace be upon him), the rejected corner stone. The kingdom of God was taken from the Israelites and given to the Ishmaelites. He is the comforter who appeared right at the ripe time. The glory of God was manifested through him. He is the spirit of truth. He said nothing out of his own accord, rather what ever he heard from God conveyed to the people in pristine purity. The record of his revelation in the form of the Holy Quran is a glaring testimony to the fulfillment of the prophecies in the person of Hadrat Muhammad. We conclude this narration saying blessed are indeed those who believe in him who came after Jesus (peace be upon him) in the name of the Lord.

"Commentary" in the text refers to *The Holy Qur'an, Arabic Text and English Translation with Commentary, Edited by Malik Ghulam Farid.* "Large Commentary" refers to *The Holy Qur'an with English Translation with Commentary, Vol. 1-5.*

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Conditions of *Bai'at* (Initiation)

in to The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam

by *Hadrat* Mirza Ghulām Ahmad of Qādiān

The Promised Messiah and Mahdi (peace be upon him)

The initiate shall solemnly promise:

- I. That he/she shall abstain from *Shirk* (association of any partner with God) right up to the day of his/her death.
- II. That he/she shall keep away from falsehood, fornication, adultery, trespasses of the eye, debauchery, dissipation, cruelty, dishonesty, mischief and rebellion; and will not permit himself/herself to be carried away by passions, however strong they may be.
- III. That he/she shall regularly offer the five daily prayers in accordance with the commandments of God and the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); and shall try his/her best to be regular in offering the Tahajjud (pre-dawn supererogatory Prayers) and invoking *Darūd* (blessings) on the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him); that he/she shall make it his/her daily routine to ask forgiveness for his/her sins, to remember the bounties of God and to praise and glorify Him.
- IV. That under the impulse of any passions, he/she shall cause no harm whatsoever to the creatures of Allah in general, and Muslims in particular, neither by his/her tongue nor by his/her hands nor by any other means.
- V. That he/she shall remain faithful to God in all circumstances of life, in sorrow and happiness, adversity and prosperity, in felicity and trials; and shall in all conditions remain resigned to the decree of Allah and keep himself/herself ready to face all kinds of indignities and sufferings in His way and shall never turn away from it at the onslaught of any misfortune; on the contrary, he/she shall march forward.
- VI. That he/she shall refrain from following un-Islamic customs and lustful inclinations, and shall completely submit himself/herself to the authority of the Holy Qur'ān; and shall make the Word of God and the Sayings of the Holy Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the guiding principles in every walk of his/her life.
- VII. That he/she shall entirely give up pride and vanity and shall pass all his/her life in humbleness, cheerfulness, forbearance and meekness.
- VIII. That he/she shall hold faith, the honor of faith, and the cause of Islam dearer to him/her than his/her life, wealth, honor, children and all other dear ones.
- IX. That he/she shall keep himself/herself occupied in the service of God's creatures for His sake only; and shall endeavor to benefit mankind to the best of his/her God-given abilities and powers.
- X. That he/she shall enter into a bond of brotherhood with this humble servant of God, pledging obedience to me in everything good, for the sake of Allah, and remain faithful to it till the day of his/her death; that he/she shall exert such a high devotion in the observance of this bond as is not to be found in any other worldly relationship and connection demanding devoted dutifulness.

(Translated from Ishtihār *Takmil-i-Tablīgh*, January 12, 1889)